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ABSTRACT

This report provides policymakers and administrators in state departments of education and local education agencies, personnel developers in institutions of higher education, professional organizations representing different disciplines, and unions and other stakeholders with information they can build on to address issues and practices surrounding the deployment, training/education, and supervision of paraeducators. The introduction outlines federal legislation and other factors that have led to a surge in paraeducator employment. The main body of the report provides information on the current state of the art with regard to paraeducators' roles and responsibilities; demographics and deployment; and employment, training and supervision (standards and infrastructures for improving paraeducators' on-the-job performance and career development). The conclusion outlines policy and systemic issues that require the collective attention of state departments of education and local education agencies. Three appendices conclude the report: (1) State Guidelines/Regulatory Procedures for the Employment and Training of Paraeducators; (2) Kansas, Maine, and Georgia Permit Systems and Utah Standards for Paraeducator Roles, Supervision, and Training; and (3) a checklist of paraeducator competencies. (Contains 30 references.) (ND)

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A STATE OF THE ART REPORT ON PARAEDUCATORS IN EDUCATION & RELATED SERVICES

Anna Lou Pickett

THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS
IN EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES
CENTER FOR ADVANCED STUDY IN EDUCATION
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY CENTER
CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
CASE #02-96 - MAY, 1996

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A STATE OF THE ART REPORT ON PARAEDUCATORS IN EDUCATION & RELATED SERVICES

I. INTRODUCTION

This is the sixth in a series of reports produced by the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services (NRCP) on practices and policies that influence the recruitment, preparation, management and retention of a skilled paraeducator [1] workforce in our nation's schools.

For those of you who have read previous reports you will be acutely aware of how few changes have occurred over the last ten to fifteen years in policies, regulatory procedures or administrative guidelines that impact on paraeducator performance and status. Problems described in previous state of the art reports still exist. In many cases they have deepened and become more pervasive.

It has been more than forty years since teacher aides were introduced into classrooms to enable teachers to spend more time planning and implementing instructional activities. In the 1950s, a post World-War II shortage of teachers forced local school boards to find alternative methods for providing education services. As a result of efforts in the Bay City, Michigan schools and at Syracuse University the efficacy of employing teacher aides to perform routine recordkeeping, housekeeping, student monitoring and material preparation was demonstrated in both general and special education (Gartner, 1971; Cruickshank & Herring, 1957).

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[1] Paraeducator, paraprofessional, paratherapist, teacher aide/assistant, instructional assistant, therapy aide/assistant, transition trainer, job coach are some of the titles assigned to school employees: 1) whose positions are either instructional in nature or who deliver other direct services to children, youth and/or their parents; and 2) who work under the supervision of teachers or other licensed practitioners who have the ultimate responsibility for the design, implementation and evaluation of education programs and student progress.

Federal legislation, enacted in the 1960s and 70s, increased the availability of education and support services for economically and educationally disadvantaged children and youth. Many of these programs including Head Start and Title I, made funds available to schools and other community organizations to employ paraprofessional. With the advent of these and other compensatory education programs paraprofessional employment gained momentum (Gartner, 1971 & Kaplan, 1977). Passage in 1974 of P.L. 94-142 the landmark legislation requiring local education agencies to provide a free appropriate education to all children and youth with disabilities gave significant impetus to the utilization of paraprofessionals in order to assure the availability of individualized programs in classrooms and other learning environments for students with disabilities.

More recently, provisions in P.L. 99-457 (the Handicapped Infant and Toddlers Act (1987), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (I.D.E.A. - 1990), the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1994) that contains new guidelines for Title I programs, the School to Work Opportunities Act (1994), Goals 2000: the Educate America Act (1994) have increased demands for highly skilled personnel at all levels. In addition to these legislative mandates there are other factors that have led to another surge in paraeducator employment, they include:

- ❒ Efforts to effectively integrate children and youth with disabilities into general education (Pickett, 1993).
- ❒ Increasing numbers of students with limited English proficiency enrolled in school systems nationwide (Pickett, 1995; McDonnell & Hill, 1993; NCES, 1993; 1990 Census).
- ❒ Growing demands for speech/language, occupational and physical therapy for infants, children and youth with disabilities (ASHA, 1995; Longhurst & Witmer, 1993; Coufel, Vasa & Steckelberg, 1991; Fenichel & Eggbeer, 1990).

- ❒ Shortages of teachers and related services personnel - particularly with regard to the recruitment and retention of teachers from racial, ethnic and language minority heritages (Recruiting New Teachers, Inc., 1993; Council of Great City Schools, 1993; NCES, 1993; OSERS, USDE, 1995).

The purpose of this report is to provide policymakers and administrators in state departments of education (SDEs) and local education agencies (LEAs), personnel developers in institutions of higher education (IHEs), professional organizations representing different disciplines, unions and other stakeholders with information they can build on to address issues and practices surrounding the deployment, training/education, and supervision of paraeducators: the newest members of education and related services teams.

The report is divided into two parts. Part I reports on: 1) the current state of the art with regard to paraeducator roles, demographics, training standards and infrastructures for improving their on-the-job performance and career development. Part II outlines policy and systemic issues that require the collective attention of policymakers, service providers, personnel developers, unions and other stakeholders. A series of appendices concludes the report.

The information and data in the sections that follow are based on: 1) analysis of a survey of Chief State School Officers (CSSOs) conducted in 1995 by the NRC for Paraprofessionals; and 2) information available from other research findings; 3) the comparison of the results of the most recent survey with those of previous NRCP surveys; and 4) the data base maintained by the NRCP over the last two decades.

II. CURRENT STATE OF THE ART

Over the last forty plus years the roles and duties of teacher aides and assistants have become more complex and demanding. In today's schools and other education settings, they work alongside their professional colleagues and assist with the delivery of instructional, therapy and other direct services to children, youth and their parents. They are technicians who are

more accurately described as *paraeducators or paratherapists* just as their counterparts in law and medicine are designated as paralegals and paramedics (Pickett, 1989).

A. ***Paraeducator Roles and Responsibilities***

Continuing efforts across the country to reform education systems and practices to better serve all children and youth with and without disabilities and other special needs have led to restructuring of teacher roles. In addition to their duties as diagnosticians of student needs, planners of age and ability appropriate curriculum activities, facilitators of learning, and assessors of student performance and progress, teachers have become frontline managers. These new administrative duties require teachers to serve as leaders in school based management teams and to confer regularly with other teachers and related services personnel in order to plan and implement personalized instructional and therapeutic treatment programs for all students who can benefit from them. Teachers also frequently serve as the primary liaisons between the school and home in order to involve parents in all aspects of their child's education. And the roles of teachers as supervisors and on-the-job coaches of paraeducators are becoming more prominent (French & Pickett, 1995; Pickett, Vasa & Steckelberg, 1993; Putnam, 1993).

The evolution of teacher and other professional practitioner roles in education and related services has had a profound impact on the nature of paraeducator roles and duties. While they still perform clerical tasks, duplicate materials, and monitor students in non-academic settings, paraeducators are expected to work at higher levels of independence and to participate in all phases of the instructional process. In early childhood, elementary, inclusive general and special education classrooms, Title I, bilingual/ESL and other compensatory education programs, under the direction of teachers and other licensed personnel, paraeducators: instruct individual and small groups of students; assist with functional assessment activities, administer standardized

tests, observe and provide objective feedback about student performance and behavior (Lyons, 1995; Stahl & Lorenz, 1995; Passaro, Pickett, Latham & HongBo, 1994; Rubin & Long, 1994; Snodgrass, 1991). And increasingly they are being assigned to assist occupational and physical therapists and speech pathologists to carry out individualized treatment plans for children and youth with sensory, speech and language, and physical disabilities (ASHA, 1995; Longhurst & Witmer, 1993; Coufal, Vasa & Steckelberg, 1991; Fenichel & Eggbeer, 1990).

The purpose of the 1994-95 survey of CSSOs conducted by the NRC for Paraprofessionals was to ascertain the following information:

- ✔ The number of paraeducators employed nationwide in programs administered by local school districts including pre-school, general, compensatory and special education and related services.
- ✔ Which states have regulatory procedures or administrative guidelines for the employment, placement and supervision of paraeducators.
- ✔ Which states have standardized, comprehensive systems of training for paraeducators.
- ✔ Which states have a credentialing/permit system for paraeducators.

B. ***Paraeducator Demographics and Deployment***

Responses to the most recent survey of CSSOs reveal that there are probably more than 500,000 full-time equivalency (FTE) paraeducator positions in programs administered by public schools across the country (up from 400,000 reported in a similar survey conducted in 1990). Of that number, a minimum of 270,000 work in the broad range of programs serving children and youth with disabilities. And 70,000 plus paraeducators are assigned to Title I and other compensatory education programs. These data are incomplete and do not provide a totally accurate picture of paraeducator demographics for several reasons. They are:

- ¶ Not all state departments of education (SDEs) collect data and maintain data bases about paraeducator employment or training mechanisms.

- ¶ Of the SDEs that do gather data about paraeducator employment, their concerns usually center on identifying paraeducators employed in federally funded or state mandated programs. Therefore, in many states instructional paraeducators or related services paraprofessional staff supported by local tax levy funds are not always included in or are under-reported in SDE census figures.

- ¶ Records maintained by most SDEs do not always indicate which programmatic areas or grade levels paraeducators are assigned to. Thus, it is not easy to determine how they are deployed, and how many work in: 1) pre-school, elementary, middle/junior high schools or secondary education; 2) Title I or other compensatory programs, 3) bilingual/multilingual or ESL programs, 4) inclusive general education or more traditional self-contained classrooms, or other special education programs and related services (i.e. vocational/transitional programs occupational/physical therapy or speech/language pathology programs.).

- ¶ And finally, data collected by SDEs rarely include information about expanded paraeducator employment in Head Start and other early childhood education programs, or early intervention home and center based programs administered by other agencies serving infants and toddlers with disabilities and other special needs that place them at-risk.

C. ***Employment, Training & Supervision - Standards and Infrastructures***

The growing reliance on paraeducators and greater emphasis on their emerging roles as members of instructional teams and providers of other direct education and related services has not resulted in increased attention to the broad range of issues that influence their performance, preparation and supervision. Comparison of the results of the most recent survey of CSSOs with those of earlier NRCP surveys and other research findings reveal a need nationwide for various constituencies to join forces to cooperatively address paraeducator issues. The most critical issues that require attention are summarized below.

- ¶ The majority of paraeducators in our country's schools spend all or part of their time providing instructional and other direct services to children, youth and/or their parents (Lyons, 1995; Stahl & Lorenz, 1995; Ruben & Long, 1994; Passaro, Pickett, Latham & Hongbo, 1994; Pickett, 1993; Snodgrass, 1991). Despite the changes in their roles from being primarily clerical, monitoring and housekeeping in nature to active participation in all phases of the education process, few LEAs have: 1) developed guidelines for supervision and/or job descriptions that (re) define their duties in new staffing arrangements; and 2) established a hierarchy of skill standards for paraeducators working in different programs and different levels of paraeducator positions (NRCP data base 1995).

- Training and professional development is primarily the responsibility of LEAs or other employers (NRCP surveys 1979, 1986, 1991, 1995). As a result, training when it is available is highly parochial, is not competency based nor standardized and is not part of comprehensive systems of career/professional development that include: 1) systematic on-the-job coaching provided by supervisors, 2) structured in-service training linked to advancement through different levels of paraeducator positions; and 3) access to articulated post-secondary education programs designed to encourage entry into the professional ranks based on career preference (French & Pickett, 1995; Ruben & Long, 1994; Passaro, Pickett, Latham & HongBo, 1994; Hofmeister, 1993; Blalock, 1991).

- Less than half (24) of the states including the District of Columbia and the Territories have established standards, regulatory procedures or administrative guidelines for paraeducator employment, roles and duties, supervision and training. Twelve (12) of the twenty-four states have credentialing mechanisms that range from multi-level certification/permit systems that define duties, training and advancement requirements to one dimensional systems that do not specify training requirements or distinctions in paraeducator position levels. For the most part, state policies and systems that do exist have been in place for twenty or more years and thus, do not always reflect the changes in the roles and duties of paraeducators.*

- As a result of contemporary education reform efforts to restructure and redefine the roles of professional practitioners, teachers have become frontline managers who are expected to direct and provide on-the-job coaching to paraeducators. Teachers, however, are rarely prepared at either the graduate or undergraduate levels to work effectively with paraeducators or to assess the potential for even greater utilization of paraeducators as one method for freeing teachers to plan and deliver personalized instruction for all students who can benefit from them (Salzburg & Morgan, 1995; Pickett & French, 1995; Pickett, Vasa & Steckelberg, 1993).

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*There are some signs of a growing awareness of the need to establish standards and policies that will facilitate to the development of permanent infrastructures to enable LEAs to more effectively tap the resources of paraeducators. Just prior to sending this report to the printers we learned that Maryland has established a credentialing system for paraeducators. In 1995, Utah approved standards for the employment, training and supervision of paraeducators employed in special education. The Idaho Division of Vocational Education with the assistance of a committee representing different education and related services provider systems, disciplines/occupations and IHE personnel preparation programs has developed task lists and curriculum guides linked to a career ladder for aides and assistants to support speech/language pathologists, physical and occupational therapists. Collaborative efforts among various constituencies to identify statewide needs connected with paraeducator employment and training are underway in Arkansas, Iowa, Minnesota, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin. And in December of 1995, the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) approved guidelines for the roles of speech language pathology aides and assistants, their training and supervision.

III. CONCLUSIONS

Many factors must be taken into account in order to develop policies, systems and guidelines/standards for paraeducator training/professional development and supervision. First and foremost decisions about paraeducator roles, duties and deployment must be based on the education and related services needs of all students served by school districts and other employers. The primary goal should be to develop policies and systems that will improve the integration of paraeducators into education teams in order to support and assist teachers and other practitioners to carry out their administrative and programmatic functions, and most especially to provide individualized/personalized services to all children and youth who can benefit from them.

The most critical issues connected with the utilization and preparation of paraeducators that need to be explored more fully by SDEs and LEAs in concert with other stakeholders in order to improve paraeducator performance and preparation are summarized below. They begin with the need to establish a data base and conduct research activities to determine state and local needs and other information policymakers, personnel developers and practitioners they can build on to:

- Identify similarities and differences in the roles and duties of paraeducators employed in various programs and levels of paraeducator positions.
- Establish and clarify distinctions in teacher and paraeducator roles and responsibilities.
- Identify a common core of skills for all paraeducators and a hierarchy of performance skills and knowledge base for paraeducators working in more advanced levels of paraeducator positions.
- Set standards for: 1) paraeducator training and career advancement; and 2) education/experiential requirements for employment.

- Establish standards for paraeducator supervision and performance evaluation.
- Identify training needs for teachers and other professional practitioners to prepare them to supervise and work effectively with paraeducators.
- Develop opportunities for comprehensive systems of training and professional development for paraeducators.

Effectively addressing issues connected with the employment, roles, training/professional development of paraeducators is not an easy task and cannot be accomplished in a vacuum. It takes the active participation of SDEs, LEAs and other constituencies with responsibility for and concerns about improving the performance, preparation, supervision and status paraeducators. The key players who need to be consulted and engaged in assessing policy questions and systemic needs should include but not be limited to: Two and four year IHE personnel preparation programs, professional organizations representing different disciplines, unions and other education provider agencies that employ or have jurisdictions of the employment and training of paraeducators.

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APPENDIX A

State Guidelines/Regulatory Procedures for the Employment & Training of Paraeducators

PARAEDUCATOR REGULATORY/ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES

The information in the charts in this Appendix is based on the results of a survey of Chief State School Officers conducted by the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services in 1994/95. Information in the charts answers questions about the following policy and/or procedural areas:

1. Does the state have a credentialing, licensure or permit system for paraeducators?
2. Does the state have education and/or experiential requirements/guidelines for the employment and supervision of paraeducators.
3. Is the utilization of paraeducators mandated in any program?
4. Are paraeducator duties specified by the state?
5. Does the state have a training plan or other mechanisms for preparing paraeducators?

PARAEDUCATOR REGULATORY/ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES

State	Credentialing System	Employment Guidelines	Mandated Utilization	Duties Specified	State Training Plan
ALABAMA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	In effect since early 70's - it applies to all		Special Education		SDE recommends that LEAs provide 30 clock hours of pre-service training. SDE has developed supported content areas.
ALASKA	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
					Responsibility of LEAs. SDE guidelines recommend 6 hours of pre-service training.
ARIZONA	No	Yes	No	No	No
ARKANSAS	No	No	Yes	No	No
	The special education unit of the SDE is providing leadership in examining the need for a para-educator credntial.		Special e. .cation		State has developed a training manual for special education paraeducators.
CALIFORNIA	Yes*	No	No	No	No*

*Guidelines for training and a certification system have been developed based on AA Degree programs available through community colleges. In addition, articulated approaches for implementing career ladders for paraeducators designed to encourage advancement and provide flexible approaches for paraeducators to earn teacher certification are being pilot tested.

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PARAEDUCATOR REGULATORY/ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES (continued)

State	Credentialing System	Employment Guidelines	Mandated Utilization	Duties Specified	State Training Plan
COLORADO	No	Yes	No	No	No*
		Special Education			Instructional materials, resources, Support services are available from SDE.

*Activities funded by the SDE and a grant from the Office of Special Education Programs (USDE) are underway to: 1) enhance the status of paraeducators, 2) test training models; and 3) prepare administrators and teachers to supervise and provide structured on-the-job coaching for paraeducators.

CONNECTICUT	No*	Yes	No	No	No*
	SDE and other state agencies have proposed standards for the employment and training of paraeducators in early intervention programs.				*SDE has implemented a career development program in cooperation with schools of education to recruit skilled paras to enter teacher training programs. When inservice training is available it is provided by LEAs.
DELAWARE	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
	In effect since early 1970s, it applies to all paraeducators.	Contained in credentialing system.			Free summer tuition for paraeducators available at 2 state universities to encourage professional development. Other training provided by local districts.
WASHINGTON, D.C.	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
				Head Start and Special Education.	Training provided by district staff to paraseducators working in Title 1, special education and other program areas.
FLORIDA	No	Yes	No	Yes*	No
		In addition to employment guidelines, standards & responsibility for supervision have been establish.		Guidelines for both appropriate & inappropriate duties for paraeducators have been set.	Inservice training is responsibility of LEAs.

*A taskforce has been appointed to address various issues connected with paraprofessional training.

GEORGIA	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
	Two tier licensure system applies to all paraeducators in all programs.	Credential includes guidelines. Standards for supervision are established.			LEAs are required to: 1) provide 30 clock hours of training for tier 1 (teacher aide) during Year 1; and 50 clock hours of training for tier 2 (paraprofessionals) during Year 1.

PARAEDUCATOR REGULATORY/ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES (continued)

State	Credentialing System	Employment Guidelines	Mandated Utilization	Duties Specified	State Training Plan
HAWAII	No*	No	No	No	No
*Legislation has been submitted to the state legislature to implement professional development and reclassification of paraeducators.					
IDAHO	No*	No	No	No	No
	*Standards for training, employment and a career ladder for occupational, physical and speech/ language assistants have been established.				Training for instructional paraeducators is provided by the SDE & LEAs.
ILLINOIS	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
	The mandatory credential applies to all para-educators. In effect since early 70s.				Districts reimbursed by states to provide training.
INDIANA	No*	Yes	No	No	No
	*Standards for the deployment and preparation of paraeducators employed in early intervention programs have been drafted but not yet approved.	Special Education			SDE guidelines require LEAs to provide training to special education paraeducators.
IOWA	No	No	Yes	Yes	No*
				In early childhood programs.	LEAs provide training
*A paraeducator special interest network is currently identifying issues connected with the employment and preparation of paraeducators and will make recommendations to the SDE for improving paraeducator training.					
KANSAS	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	3 tiered system in effect since mid 70s - applies to Spec. Ed. paraeducators only.	Contained in state plan. Responsibility for supervision is established.	Several special education program areas.	Contained in state plan.	Preparation of LEA trainers, resource material, and other support services provided by the SDE are linked to permit system.
KENTUCKY	No*	Yes	No	Yes	No
	*Standards for paraeducators employed in early intervention/ childhood programs are being developed.				Training requirements established by LEAs.
LOUISIANA	No*	Yes	No	Yes	No
	Statewide credentialing system established in 1980s for spec. ed. paraeducators is no longer mandated. However some Parishes base training on competencies set by the system.			Local option based on competency based system developed by state.	Training is provided by LEAs.

PARAEDUCATOR REGULATORY/ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES (continued)

State	Credentialing System	Employment Guidelines	Mandated Utilization	Duties Specified	State Training Plan
MAINE	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
	Three tiered system in effect since mid 1980s. Applies to all paraeducators.	Contained in credentialing system.		In credentialing system.	LEAs provide level of training specified by credentialing system.
MARYLAND	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
	Established in 1995 for all paraeductors.			Locally for Spec. Educ., Title 1 and other programs.	LEAs provide training. Baltimore City Schools have an extensive training and career ladder program for all paraprofessionals.
MASSACHUSETTS	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
				Bilingual, Spec. Ed. & Occ. Ed.	LEAs provide training.
MICHIGAN	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
			Spec. Ed.	Spec. Ed.	LEAs are reimbursed by the SDE to provide training.
MINNESOTA	No*	Yes	Yes	No	No*
			Early childhood programs.		

*Task force representing the SDE, Community Colleges, University of Minnesota, NEA, AFT, AFSCME, local education agencies has gathered data about current utilization, training programs, and personnel practices. The need for establishing standards and/or a certification system is being explored. Task force also sponsors a statewide conference for paraprofessionals in general, special and early childhood education and adult services.

MISSISSIPPI	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
			Mississippi Reading Improvement Program		State guidelines assists LEAs in the implementation of training
MISSOURI	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Spec. Ed. & Title I guidelines for early childhood in development.	Spec. Ed. & Title 1.		Special Education paraeducators must receive 15 hours of training during Year 1 and 10 hours in subsequent years. Title 1 reimburses districts. SDE reimburses districts for special education training instructional materials available through Ed. Resource Center. SDE also sponsors statewide conferences for all paraeducators.
MONTANA	No	No	No	No	No

PARAEDUCATOR REGULATORY/ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES (continued)

State	Credentialing System	Employment Guidelines	Mandated Utilization	Duties Specified	State Training Plan
NEBRASKA	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
		Contained in administrative guidelines. Includes standards for 1) supervision and 2) ethical & professional practices for the employment of paraeducators.		Administrative guidelines define appropriate duties for paraeducators.	Training guidelines have been set for Spec. Ed. paraeducators UN-Lincoln prepares teachers to provide OJT for paraeducators.
NEVADA	No	No	No	No	No
NEW HAMPSHIRE	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
	3 tiered system in effect since 1971. It is voluntary & local option prevails.		Spec. Educ. or if class size limits are exceeded in other program areas.		Provided by local districts. Guidelines established by SDE.
NEW JERSEY	Yes*	Yes	No	No	No
	*Licensure for certified occupational & physical therapy assistants only.	State requires LEAs to develop job descriptions and certify that paraeducators meet local qualifications for employment.			
NEW MEXICO	Yes*	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	Four tiered licensing process for teacher/aides assistants approved in 1990; 2) OT & PT therapy assistants are recognized; and 3) standards for employment and training of paraeducators employed in early intervention programs are currently being discussed.		Kindergarten, grades 1 & 2, depending upon class size & spec. education.		Albuquerque public schools have a structured in-service program linked to CEUs available from UNM & a career ladder.
NEW YORK	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
	In effect since early 70s. Two tiered system for all paraeducators.	Includes standards for supervision.			NYC public schools have a career ladder for all paraeducators working toward teacher certification or other professional licensure. SDE suggests that LEAs require six semester hours of training for teacher assistants.

PARAEDUCATOR REGULATORY/ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES (continued)

State	Credentialing System	Employment Guidelines	Mandated Utilization	Duties Specified	State Training Plan
NORTH CAROLINA	No	No	Yes	No	No
			All K-3rd grade classes have paraeducators.		Provided by LEAs.
NORTH DAKOTA	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
		Includes standards for supervision.		State requires LEAs to develop job descriptions containing curriculum oriented tasks.	SDE requires LEAs to provide a minimum of 20 clock hours of instruction. Training content is specified for special education paraeducators. SDE & federal funds may be used by LEAs to employ adjunct trainers.
OHIO	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
	Mandatory, in effect since early 70s. Applies to all paraeducators.	Defined in credentialing system.	Spec. Educ. only.		Training for spec. educ. paraeducators offered through SDE funded Educ. Resource Centers. Other paraeducators trained by local districts. Cleveland has a training program tied to advancement based on personal career choices.
OKLAHOMA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	Spec. Ed. paraeducators only.	Spec. Ed.	Spec. Ed.	Spec. Ed.	Resource and instructional materials developed by state for Special Education paraeducators.
OREGON	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
					LEAs provide training. Several IHEs, both 2 & 4 year, offer pre- and in-service training for para-educators.
PENNSYLVANIA	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
					SDE encourages LEAs to provide training. Philadelphia and Pittsburgh have structured in-service for all paraeducators. Several intermediate units provide training to special education paraeducators.
RHODE ISLAND	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Paraeducator taskforce currently assessing need for standards for training linked to career ladder.				General guidelines for in-service training recommended by SDE. LEAs provide training.

PARAEDUCATOR REGULATORY/ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES (continued)

State	Credentialing System	Employment Guidelines	Mandated Utilization	Duties Specified	State Training Plan
SOUTH CAROLINA	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
			Kindergarten/ Spec. Ed.		LEAs provide the training. Guidelines for training set by state.
SOUTH DAKOTA	No	Yes	No	No	No
		General & Spec. Ed.			
TENNESSEE	No	No	Yes	No	No
			All Basic Skills Programs.		
TEXAS	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
	Applies to all paraeducators. In effect since early 80s - local options prevail.				Guidelines for training set by state.
UTAH	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
		Includes standards for supervision approved by the SDE.		Standards have have been set for special education paraeducators.	Training provided by LEAs, based on standards established by SDE.
VERMONT	No	No	No	No	No
	A certification system in effect from 1973-86 is no longer recognized. The only requirement now is that para-educators work under direct supervision of a certified teacher.				Training for spec. ed. paraeducators is provided through a certificate program at the University of Vermont.
VIRGINIA	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
		SDE is currently reviewing and revising guide-lines.	Pre-school programs for children with disabilities.		Community colleges offer training that is recognized by some districts.
WASHINGTON	No*	Yes	No	No	Yes**

*Collaborative efforts are underway between the SDE, local provider agencies, local education service districts, IHEs and unions to assess current policies and procedures that influence the preparation and supervision of paraeducators.

**Statewide training efforts provided by local education service districts using standardized instructional materials is underway. Seattle has created a systematic programs to recruit paraeducators into teacher education.

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PARAEDUCATOR REGULATORY/ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES & PROCEDURES (continued)

State	Credentialing System	Employment Guidelines	Mandated Utilization	Duties Specified	State Training Plan
WEST VIRGINIA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	SDE has developed standards and certification for new title of para-professional. It expands the duties teacher aides and assistant positions. However, neither aides or assistants are covered by the credential.	Guidelines for supervision are in effect.	Kindergarten		Responsibility of LEAs.
WISCONSIN	No*	Yes	No	No	No
					LEAs and co-operative education agencies provide training.

*A Taskforce is currently assessing the need for standardized training and the development of standards and mechanisms for improving the performance of paraeducators.

WYOMING	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
		General & Spec. Ed.			Districts are reim-bursed to provide training.
VIRGIN ISLANDS	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
	Spec. Ed.				Training provided by the SDE, resource centers & LEAs.

APPENDIX B

Kansas, Maine, Georgia Permit Systems & Utah Standards for Paraeducator Roles, Supervision and Training

THE KANSAS PARAPROFESSIONAL PERMIT SYSTEM

The Kansas Statewide Permit System was developed in the late 1970s in response to a legislative mandate. It applies only to paraprofessional personnel employed in special education programs administered by local school districts. The permit defines a "special education paraprofessional" as an employee who is permitted to perform instructional tasks. The possession of a paraprofessional permit indicates that the school district is providing necessary training for the skills needed by the special education paraprofessional. This is similar in concept to the way a teaching certificate denotes training in preparation for a teaching position.

The permit level (I, II, or III) defines the extent of training a paraprofessional has had. It allows paraprofessionals to attain proficiency beyond an entry level. The standards and requirements for the individual permit levels are:

LEVEL I The requirements for a Paraprofessional I permit are participation in at least four inservice sessions totaling at least 20 clock hours of inservice training per school year. (The local education agency may choose to substitute all or part of the above requirements with an equivalent amount of appropriate college coursework taken during the school year. Any paraprofessional, without prior experience as an instructional paraprofessional, shall be approved and shall receive a Paraprofessional I permit after participation in 20 clock hours of inservice training.)

LEVEL II The requirements for a Paraprofessional II permit are:

a) two years experience as an instructional paraprofessional;

b) completion of 30 semester college hours of approved academic work, an equivalent of 450 clock hours of approved inservice training, or a combination of each of the two totaling 450 clock hours; and

c) participation in at least four inservice sessions totaling at least 20 clock hours of inservice training per school year.

LEVEL III The requirements for a Paraprofessional III permit are:

a) three years experience as an instructional paraprofessional;

b) completion of 60 semester college hours of approved academic work; an associate degree from an approved training program for instructional paraprofessional; a certificate from an approved training program for instructional paraprofessionals from a vocational technical school; equivalent 900 clock hours; and

c) participation in at least four inservice sessions totaling at least 20 clock hours of inservice training per school year.

In order to advance to a higher level, a paraprofessional shall verify successful completion of the requirements stipulated under each previous permit.

THE MAINE CERTIFICATION SYSTEM FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS

The Maine Certification System for Paraprofessionals was developed in the 1980s. It applies to all paraprofessional personnel working in programs administered by local school districts. In addition to the training provided by local education agencies efforts are currently underway to develop an AA degree program in community colleges that is linked to admission to teacher education.

LEVEL I: EDUCATIONAL TECHNICIAN

Function:

The Level I Educational Technician may:

- review and reinforce learning previously introduced by the classroom teacher or an appropriate content specialist or assist in drill or practice activities
- perform non-instructional. non-evaluative functions
- assist in the preparation of instructional materials or provide classroom management functions

Preparation:

- high school diploma or equivalent
- introductory orientation training required within the first eight weeks of employment
- ongoing in-service training required -
  It is recommended that training address the following areas:
  - understanding the roles/responsibilities of the educational technician
  - understanding the student with special needs
  - understanding the instructional process
  - understanding emergency, health and safety procedures

(continued)

Supervision:

- instructional duties directly supervised by the classroom teacher or an appropriate content specialist

- under general administrative supervision when performing non-instructional student related duties

LEVEL II: EDUCATIONAL TECHNICIAN

Function:

The Level II Educational Technician may:

- perform all of the duties described in Level I and additionally

- introduce new learning pre-planned in collaboration with the classroom teacher or appropriate content specialist

Preparation:

- two years of post-secondary education in an educationally related field

- three years of successful experience employed at Level I with documentation of training in the following areas:

    - understanding the roles/responsibilities of the Educational Technician

    - understanding the student with special needs

    - understanding the instructional process

    - understanding emergency, health and safety procedures

Supervision:

- meets with teacher or an appropriate content specialist and receives instruction/directions on daily basis

(continued)

- in class, may perform short-term instruction and classroom management activities under the direct supervision of the teacher or appropriate content specialist

- conduct one-on-one or small groups with professional supervision

LEVEL III: EDUCATIONAL TECHNICIAN

Function:

The Level III Educational Technician may:

- perform all of the duties described in Levels I and II

Preparation:

- an Associate's Degree from an approved program or

- 5 years of successful experience as an Educational Technician with documentation of additional training in the specialty area of employment

- ongoing in-service training required in the specialty area of employment

Supervision:

- meets with teacher or appropriate content specialist and receives instruction/direction on a regular basis

- may perform short-term instruction and classroom management activities with professional supervision

- may supervise small groups of students in community based programs with professional supervision

THE GEORGIA AUXILIARY PERSONNEL LICENSE CRITERIA

The Georgia Department of Education recently revised a credentialing process for paraprofessional personnel, employed by local school districts, that had been in effect for several years. The new procedures recognize two levels of auxiliary support personnel - Paraprofessional and Aide. The State Department has established qualifications for employment for both levels, standards for licensing and renewal, evaluation criteria and procedures for verifying that eligibility requirements have been met. Local districts are responsible for designing and providing training using guidelines set by the state, maintaining employee records with regard to completion of staff development and certifying that a person is eligible for licensure or renewal.

GUIDELINES FOR THE PARAPROFESSIONAL POSITION

The State Department defines a Paraprofessional as: A person working in a support position under the supervision of the classroom teacher(s). The paraprofessional has some decision making authority limited and regulated by the professional. The major responsibilities and duties assigned to Paraprofessionals may include but not be limited to the following functions:

A. Instructional Activities
   1. Conduct small group or individual classroom activities based on lesson plans developed by the teacher.
   2. Assist with supervision of students.
   3. Assist with student assessment, grading work and tests, and collecting data on student progress.

B. Management Activities
   1. Assist with routine record keeping.
   2. Assist with the preparation of materials for instruction (including the copying/duplicating of materials, construction of displays/bulletin boards, learning centers, and manipulatives).
   3. Locate, operate and return needed equipment.
   4. Assist with classroom housekeeping.
   5. Assist in the ordering and inventory of classroom equipment and materials.
   6. Assist with schoolwide supervision, such as loading/unloading buses.
   7. Other duties as assigned by the teacher.

CRITERIA FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LICENSING

Candidates for a position as a paraprofessional must have a High School Diploma or GED equivalent. Persons who meet the qualifications established for the paraprofessional position may be employed with <u>probationary status</u>. They shall have 10 clock hours of training

(continued)

during the first 30 days of employment. They shall complete 40 additional clock hours of training within the first calendar year of employment. Upon completion of 50 clock hours of training, a license with a five-year validity period shall be issued. Paraprofessionals employed on probationary status who do not meet the licensing requirements within a year may not be re-employed on a probationary status. Persons who complete a diploma program at a post-secondary technical institution in childcare or hold Georgia teacher certification in the field in which they are employed are exempt from the 40 additional clock hours of training within the first year of employment.

GUIDELINES FOR THE AIDE POSITION

In Georgia the position of Aide is defined as: An employee who works under the supervision of professional certified personnel. The aide takes no independent action and has no decision making authority but performs routine tasks assigned by professionally certified personnel. The major responsibilities and specific duties assigned to Aides may include but are not limited to the following functions:

A. Instructional Activities
   1. Assist in the scoring of student tests.
   2. Assist with registration, initial records, and assignment of materials for new students.
   3. Assist the classroom teacher in securing, organizing, and administering make-up work for students due to illness.

B. Management Activities
   1. Assist in the preparation of materials used for instruction.
   2. Assist in the distribution of instructional materials.
   3. Assist in the ordering and inventory of class equipment and materials.
   4. Assist in the verification of student absences by phone contact with parents.
   5. Assist in the maintenance of computer records and/or teacher records related to the instructional program and student progress.
   6. Assist in the maintenance of permanent records and attendance registers.
   7. Assist the principal/assistant principal in monitoring attendance, honor roll, outstanding students, and other programs that enhance instruction.
   8. Assist in organizing field trip requests and handling follow-up arrangements.
   9. Other duties as assigned by the supervisor.

CRITERIA FOR EMPLOYMENT AND LICENSING

Candidates for a position as an Aide must have a High School Diploma or GED equivalent. Persons who meet the qualifications for an aide may be employed with probationary status. They shall have 10 clock hours of training within the first 30 days of employment. They shall complete 20 additional clock hours of training within the first calendar year of employment. Upon completion of 30 clock hours of training, a license with a five-year validity period shall be issued. Aides employed on probationary status who do not meet the licensing requirements

(continued)

within a year may not be re-employed on probationary status. Persons who complete a diploma program at a post-secondary technical institution in childcare or hold a Georgia teacher certification in the field in which they are employed are exempt from the 20 additional clock hours of training within the first year of employment.

PROGRAM CRITERIA FOR TRAINING FOR BOTH PARAPROFESSIONALS AND AIDES

Training and continued development programs may be provided by local school systems, area vocational technical schools, colleges and universities, or Regional Education Service Agencies. At a minimum, the training program for both positions shall include, but not be limited to, instruction in the following areas: 1) Orientation to school policies, safety and emergency procedures in effect in the district; 2) legal, ethical and professional responsibilities of educational personnel, the roles and responsibilities of a Paraprofessional/Aide; 3) licensing requirements; and 4) effective communication skills for interacting with students, co-workers and parents.

Additional training sessions for Paraprofessionals should provide them with an understanding of learning styles and the basic needs of children; patterns and characteristics of growth and development; and an understanding of the differences among students with special needs. Persons assigned by the district to a Paraprofessional position should also participate in formal inservice sessions that address the following topics: 1) orientation to media centers; 2) use and care of instructional materials and equipment; 3) a review of Georgia Department of Education curriculum guides, local school materials, system handbooks, and curriculum guides; 4) instructional strategies related to the grade level and content areas; 5) classroom management techniques; and 6) awareness of student assessment program.

The training program designed to prepare an employee to perform the duties assigned to an Aide should include: 1) record keeping techniques; 2) the use and care of equipment; and 3) classroom procedures.

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Following a probationary period of one year, performance evaluation shall determine the need for further training and/or recommend termination of employment. The guidelines established by the state require the local districts to carry out subsequent evaluations of personnel assigned to both positions annually.

STATEWIDE STANDARDS FOR PARAEDUCATORS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION IN UTAH

Rationale

State Law (53A-1-402) requires the State Board of Education to establish minimum standards for public schools. This law makes specific reference to the need for standards for: 1) The qualifications of personnel providing direct student services; 2) School administrative and supervisory services; and 3) The evaluation of instructional personnel.

These minimum standards apply to paraeducators as well as to certified staff.

The Utah Law addressing the education of children with disabilities (53A-15-301) is very specific regarding the need to address paraeducators. The law states: The rules adopted by the State Board of Education shall include the following....(g) Qualification standards for aides and instructional assistants (p.900).

In summary, applicable Utah law requires the State Board of Education to establish standards that address the qualifications, administration, supervision, and evaluation of paraeducators, particularly those paraeducators involved in the delivery of student services. The format for the standards and guidelines was selected to be consistent with the intent of the legislative mandates.

Special Education Rules: Qualification Standards for Paraeducators in Special Education

Under the supervision of licensed and/or certified personnel, paraeducators shall participate within clearly defined roles to assist those personnel in providing appropriate education and related services for students with disabilities.

School districts shall define and clarify specific job roles and responsibilities for paraeducators. The roles and responsibilities for paraeducators serving as "aides" and "instructional assistants" or any other job title used in a school district shall address how paraeducators assist in the following areas related to the individual job descriptions:

1. data collection for determining strengths and weaknesses
2. implementation of instruction and curriculum
3. behavior management
4. monitoring of student progress

Guidelines for Support to the Standards for Paraeducators in Special Education

✔ *Paraeducators and the Instructional Team*

A. The paraeducator should be considered and supported as a member of the instructional team responsible for assisting in the delivery of education and related services.

(continued)

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B. A specific title, e.g., "Instructional Assistant," should be used for paraeducators whose duties are predominantly instructional and who work under the direct supervision of certified personnel.

C. Staffing arrangements involving paraeducators should enhance the continuity and quality of services for students.

✔ *Supervision of Paraeducators*

A. Paraeducators should receive appropriate supervision to ensure the delivery of effective educational services to students with disabilities.

B. Preservice and inservice efforts should address the training and management needs of teachers and other professionals who are directly responsible for the supervision of paraeducators.

C. Administrators should understand the roles and responsibilities of para-educators and assume a central role in the administration of an effective paraeducational program.

✔ *Paraeducators Training*

A. Paraeducators should receive training through district inservice or a local community college or university in the general areas relating to their responsibilities as well as on-the-job training specific to their job assignments to ensure an appropriate education for students with disabilities.

B. Paraeducators should be provided with evaluation and feedback relating to training content.

✔ *Career Recognition and Support of Paraeducators*

A. Paraeducators should be recognized and supported at a building, district, and state level for their expertise and contributions.

B. Paraeducators should receive ongoing opportunities for career development.

C. The Utah State Office of Education should work with 2 and 4 year institutions of higher education to provide career opportunities for para-educators and should support their transition to professional training.

D. School districts should provide appropriate support for paraeducators in district communications and staff development vehicles such as newsletters, inservice training, and conference activities.

✔ *Paraeducators Advisory Committee*

A standing advisory committee to include administrators, teachers, other professionals, paraeducators, parents, and a representative from higher education should be organized at the state level to review and support the standards and associated guidelines for paraeducators.

APPENDIX C

Paraeducator Competencies

I. CORE COMPETENCIES FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PARAEDUCATORS*

To work in general, special, and compensatory education paraeducators will demonstrate:

- ✓ **an understanding of differentiated staffing patterns and the distinctions among the roles and responsibilities of professional and paraprofessional personnel;**
- ✓ **an ability to communicate with colleagues, follow instructions and use problem solving skills that will enable them to work as effective members of the instructional team;**
- ✓ **a knowledge of the legal and human rights of children and youth and their families;**
- ✓ **an ability to practice ethical and professional standards of conduct established by the agency where they are employed;**
- ✓ **a sensitivity to diversity in cultural heritages, life styles, and value systems among the children, youth and families they serve;**
- ✓ **a knowledge of a) patterns of human development and milestones typically achieved at different ages; and b) risk factors that may prohibit or impede typical development;**
- ✓ **an ability to motivate and assist children and youth to build self-esteem; and strengthen skills to monitor and control their behavior;**
- ✓ **an ability to follow health, safety and emergency procedures developed by the school where they are employed;**

II. SPECIFIC/ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES FOR PARAEDUCATORS WORKING IN INCLUSIVE GENERAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSROOMS

To work in integrated settings paraeducators will demonstrate:

- ✓ **an understanding of the value of serving children and youth with disabilities in inclusive settings;**
- ✓ **an ability to instruct students in academic subjects using lesson plans and instructional strategies developed by teachers or other professional support staff;**

***Developed by the National Resource Center for Paraprofessionals in Education and Related Services (1993).**

- ✓ **an ability to: a) gather and maintain data about the performance and behavior of individual students; and b) confer with special and general education practitioners about student schedules, instructional goals, progress and performance;**

- ✓ **an ability to use developmentally and age appropriate instructional procedures and reinforcement techniques;**

- ✓ **an ability to operate computers and use assistive technology and adaptive equipment that will enable students with special needs to participate more fully in general education.**

III. SPECIFIC/ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES FOR PARAEDUCATORS IN EARLY INTERVENTION/CHILDHOOD OR HOME VISITOR PROGRAMS

To work in home visitor programs paraeducators will demonstrate:

- ✓ **an ability to participate as a member of the IFSP team responsible for developing service plans and education objectives for parents and their children;**

- ✓ **an ability to listen to and communicate with parents in order to gather information the service delivery team can build on to meet the needs of the child and family;**

- ✓ **a knowledge of: a) health care providers, social services, education agencies, and other support systems available in the community to assist parents and their child; and b) an ability to support parents and provide them with the skills and information they require to gain access to these services;**

- ✓ **an ability to enhance parent interactions with their child by using/ demonstrating effective techniques and materials to stimulate cognitive, physical, social, and language development;**

To work in center based programs for young children paraeducators will demonstrate:

- ✓ **an ability to use developmentally appropriate instructional interventions for curriculum activities in the areas of cognitive, motor, self-help, social/play and language development for infants and young children ages 0-5;**

- ✓ **an ability to a) gather information about the performance of individual children and their behaviors; and b) share it with professional colleagues;**

- ✓ **an ability to prepare and use developmentally appropriate materials;**

- ✓ **an ability to communicate and work effectively with parents and other primary caregivers.**

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IV. SPECIFIC/ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES FOR PARAEDUCATORS WORKING IN VOCATIONAL AND TRANSITIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS

To work in vocational and transitional programs paraeducators will demonstrate:

- ✓ **an understanding of the distinctions among different employment models;**
- ✓ **an ability to participate as a member of the team responsible for transitional planning and vocational assessment for individual students;**
- ✓ **an ability to participate in pre-employment, vocational, or transitional training in classrooms or at off-campus sites;**
- ✓ **an ability to task analyze job requirements, sequence the day, observe and record data, and provide training at job sites using appropriate instructional interventions;**
- ✓ **an ability to motivate students to work;**
- ✓ **an ability to communicate effectively with employers and employees at work sites, and personnel or members of the public in other transitional learning environments;**
- ✓ **an ability to modify services based on school and worksite regulatory procedures; and**
- ✓ **a knowledge of a) social, rehabilitation and support systems that will enable youth to participate fully in the community; and b) an ability to provide students and parents with skills and information they can use to gain access to the services.**